



## **DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

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### **Hawai'i Department of Health reports COVID-19 testing capacity now up to total of 3,620 tests per day in all four counties as the state begins to reopen**

HONOLULU -- In-state COVID-19 testing capabilities have been a top concern throughout the pandemic, but an assessment of statewide testing capacity this week shows there are ample supplies of tests that can be conducted in Hawai'i.

It means Hawai'i residents can breathe a sigh of relief. Healthcare providers can now consider testing patients whom they suspect may be infected to ensure rapid identification of cases. This is a shift in the Hawai'i Department of Health's earlier guidance that required specific symptoms and epidemiological criteria before testing.

In the past three weeks, the number of sites conducting tests has increased from five to 11, and testing is now available in all four counties, including on all of the Neighbor Islands.

One of the critical requirements for the state to confidently and safely continue its path to fully reopen is readily accessible COVID-19 tests for all who meet recommended testing criteria, with test results available within 48 hours.

According to data compiled by DOH, as of Monday, May 18, Hawai'i has more than 38,300 tests on hand for COVID-19 tests and is performing an average of 690 tests each day, with test results available the same day or by the next day. The maximum turnaround time is three days. The number of staff trained to perform the tests has also doubled, jumping from 68 to 135 within the past month.

"The compilation of data provides a realistic snapshot of the state's overall testing capacity," said Dr. Edward Desmond, State Laboratories Division (SLD) administrator, who compiled the data. "If necessary, the state has the capability to cumulatively ramp up to 3,620 tests a day, and this number is expected to significantly increase over the next three weeks."

In addition to the SLD, 10 laboratories (three public health and seven private sector) and healthcare facilities on O'ahu and the neighbor islands currently are testing collected specimens. Private laboratories include Clinical Labs of Hawaii, Diagnostic Laboratory Services,

and S&G Labs in Kona. Healthcare facilities include Kaiser Permanente and Adventist Health Castle.

Desmond added Hawai'i initially sent tests to mainland labs to determine if individuals were COVID-19 positive and there was a backlog and results could take up to a week to receive.

"As a state, we've come a long way in a relatively short time to become more self-sufficient," he said. "We initially had several hundred specimens waiting to be tested at mainland labs. That number has dropped to just 60 outstanding, untested specimens because our need to send samples to the mainland has been greatly reduced because of our in-state capabilities."

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